

Amendments To The Claims:

1.-44. (canceled)

45. (Currently Amended) A method for managing the supplying for a number plurality of service providers ~~with technical of~~ service devices, wherein each of the service providers is assigned a plurality of service devices in each case and each of the service providers in each case provides services to a plurality of installation sites which are at different locations from storage sites for their service devices, the method comprising the following steps:

pooling data regarding a plurality of service devices in an inventory pool as device data records in a database, wherein the inventory pool comprises service provider inventories for service devices owned by each of the respective plurality of service providers and a device provider inventory for service devices owned by the device provider;

managing the service devices in the inventory pool by a data processing system comprising a computer -a device service provider in communication with the database accessible across a communication network by one or more client computers -to which the respective plurality of service devices is made available by the service providers, wherein the managing is performed with the aid of a data processing system, wherein each of the service providers has access to the data processing system is programmed to and is able to request a delivery of a service device to a desired installation site via the data processing system; and

(a) receive a request from a client computer of a requesting service provider for a requested service device;

(b) check the availability of the requested service device by searching the inventory pool in the database by:

      (i) searching an inventory of the requesting service provider in the inventory pool and providing for loaning of the requested service device if located; otherwise,

      (ii) searching the device provider inventory and providing for leasing the requested service device if located; otherwise,

      (iii) searching the service provider inventories of other service providers in the inventory pool and leasing the requested service device if located

~~delivering the requested service device to the desired installation site by the device service provider.~~

46. (canceled).

47. (canceled).

48. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 45, ~~wherein following a request for a service device by one of the service providers the following steps are executed by the data processing system: checking of the availability of the requested service device in the service provider's service device inventory managed by the device service provider, and if there is availability in the service device inventory of the service provider, further comprising delivering the requested service device to a desired site of the requesting service provider by the device provider from the service provider's service device inventory.~~

49. (canceled).

50. (canceled).

51. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 50 ~~45~~, wherein the following further steps are executed by the data processing system:

~~if there is no availability in the service device inventory of the further service providers inventory pool, providing for purchasing and delivering of the requested service device to the requesting service provider by the device service provider.~~

52. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 45, wherein the technical service devices comprise tools, and/or measuring means, and/or testing means.

53. (canceled).

54. (canceled).

55. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 45, wherein ~~a device data record is stored in the data processing system for each of the service devices, said each of the~~ device data records containing data uniquely characterizing the respective service device in terms of device type, location and user.

56. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 55, wherein each of the device data records further includes one or more of device owner data, and/or leasing costs data, and/or purchase price data.

57. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 55, wherein each of the device data records further includes a date for a recall of the service device.

58. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 57, wherein the data processing system automatically compares a current date with the date for a recall of the service device, and wherein if the current date ~~exceeds~~is after the recall date, a recall of the service device to the device service provider is initiated.

59. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 57, wherein the date for a recall of the service device is a date for a calibration of the service device.

60. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 45, wherein the service providers have a defined set of service personnel who can request service devices, and wherein in the data processing system is stored for each of the service personnel a respective personnel data record containing data uniquely characterizing the service personnel in terms of name and associated service provider.

61. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 60, wherein the personnel data record comprises one or more of criteria for the validity of a device request and/or a person with release authorization for the release of an invalid device request.

62. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 61, wherein, when a device request is made by service personnel the data processing system checks the validity of the device request regarding the personnel-related admissibility criteria, and wherein, if the device request is not valid, the data processing system requests a person with release authorization associated with the service personnel to initiate a release of the device request.

63. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 61, wherein the personnel-related admissibility criteria comprise a maximum permitted purchase price.

64. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 60, wherein one or more of the service devices are assigned to service personnel in the data processing system, and wherein only the service devices assigned to said service personnel are offered by the data processing system in the form of a catalog for requests.

65. (canceled).

66. (Currently Amended) A system for managing the supplying for a plurality of service providers ~~with technical~~of service devices, ~~wherein each of the service providers is assigned a plurality of service devices in each case and each of the service providers in each case provides services at a number of installation sites that are at different locations from storage sites for their service devices~~, the system comprising:

a data processing system comprising a computer accessible across a communication network by one or more client computers;

a database in communication with the data processing system, wherein the database comprises an inventory pool comprising device data records for service devices, wherein the inventory pool comprises service provider inventories for service devices owned by each of a respective plurality of service providers and a device provider inventory for service devices owned by a device provider;

wherein the data processing system is programmed to:

(a) receive a request from a client computer of a requesting service provider for a requested service device;

(b) check the availability of the requested service device by searching the inventory pool in the database by:

(i) searching an inventory of the requesting service provider in the inventory pool and providing for loaning of the requested service device if located; otherwise,

(ii) searching the device provider inventory and providing for leasing the requested service device if located; otherwise,

(iii) searching the service provider inventories of other service providers in the inventory pool and leasing the requested service device if located.

~~-of a device service provider to whom the respective plurality of service devices is made available by the service providers, for administration of the service devices, whereby the data processing system is accessible to each of the service providers and a delivery of one or more of their service devices to a desired installation site can be requested via the data processing system; and~~

~~a mechanism for initiating the delivery of the requested service device(s) to the desired installation site by the device service provider.~~

67. (New) The system of claim 66 wherein the data processing system is further programmed to providing for purchasing of the requested service device by the requesting service provider if there is no availability in the inventory pool.

68. (New) The system of claim 66 wherein each of the device data records contains data uniquely characterizing the respective service device in terms of device type, location, user, owner data, leasing costs data, and purchase price data.

69. (New) The system of claim 66 wherein each of the device data records further include a date for a recall of the service device wherein the data processing system automatically compares a current date with the date for a recall of the service device, and wherein if the current date is after the recall date, a recall of the service device to the device service provider is initiated.

70. (New) The system of claim 69 wherein the date for the recall of the service device is a date for a calibration of the service device.

71. (New) The system of claim 66 wherein when a device request is made the data processing system checks the validity of the device request based on personnel-related admissibility criteria, and wherein, if the device request is not valid, the data processing system requests a person with release authorization to initiate a release of the device request.

72. (New) The system of claim 71 wherein the personnel-related admissibility criteria comprise a maximum permitted purchase price.